

VZCZCXRO2523
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHVJ #0388 0861613
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 271613Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9967
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 000388

SIPDIS

EUR (JONES), EUR/SCE (FOOKS, MCGUIRE), INL (CARROLL),
EUR/ACE (KEETON); S/WCI (WILLIAMSON; VIBUL-JOLLES); NSC FOR
HELGERSON; OSD FOR BEIN; DOJ FOR OPDAT (ALEXANDRE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [KAWC](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA - SIPA ACTION AGAINST ID FRAUD ANGERS DODIK

REF: SARAJEVO 228

Classified By: DCM Judith B. Cefkin for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

CIPS Operation Nets Key Officials in the RS

¶1. (U) The State Investigative and Protective Agency (SIPA), acting on the order of the State Prosecutor's Office, on March 24 arrested three officials in Bijeljina in eastern Republika Srpska (RS) in connection with the fraudulent issuance of Citizenship Identity Protection System (CIPS) identification cards to criminals, including supporters of persons indicted for war crimes (PIFWCS). The arrested officials include two police officials -- Goran Dzelmic, Chief of Uniformed Police at the Bijeljina Police Station and Tomo Macar, Deputy Chief of the Janja Police Station -- and Dragana Knezevic, a civil servant in the RS Ministry of Interior. All three were later released from custody until trial. SIPA officials also questioned Dragi Milosevic, Deputy Chief of the Organized Crime Department at the Ministry's headquarters in Banja Luka and its third highest ranking official, along with Slobodan Nikic, the Deputy Chief of the Bijeljina Police Department. The operation was part of a wider state-level investigation, which had resulted in the arrests of twenty individuals operating in several cities throughout Bosnia.

Reactions from the RS

¶2. (U) The RS police did cooperate in the arrest; Nonetheless, news of the operation drew swift, negative reactions from RS PM Dodik. In statements to the press, Dodik claimed that SIPA's involvement in the operation was unnecessary, insisting that RS police officials were capable of carrying out operations against their colleagues without SIPA's assistance. He also claimed that SIPA was being used by "foreign prosecutors," who are not accountable for their actions, to undermine the RS. Notably, Dodik said that RS efforts to counter the influence of foreign prosecutors may lead to a "redefining of all relations in BiH," which presumably was an allusion to his earlier threat to pull ethnic Serbs out of state-level institutions if the State Prosecutor's investigation into alleged corruption by Dodik and other RS officials proceeds. Minister of Interior Stanislav Cadoj publicly criticized the latest CIPS-related operation, saying that it had greatly damaged the Ministry and the RS police, and that the operation had resulted from poor communication between the State Prosecutor's Office and the RS Ministry of Interior, for which the State Prosecutor's Office was responsible.

COMMENT

13. (C) Although this latest CIPS operation was a straightforward law enforcement operation, RS PM Dodik chose to politicize it, using it as a pretext to continue his campaign to discredit SIPA and the State Prosecutor's Office.

This investigation is not related to the investigation targeting Dodik for corruption, however. Regardless, Dodik's rhetoric in the CIPS case, much like that in the corruption case, further underscores the challenge we face in promoting the rule of law and strong state-level judicial institutions in Bosnia.

ENGLISH